

Claims:

1. A thixotropy-imparting agent comprising chain
clay mineral particles, characterized in that said
5 chain clay mineral particles have:

a thixotropic index (TI) defined by the following
formula,

$$TI = \eta_6 / \eta_{60}$$

10 wherein η_6 is a viscosity (at 25°C) of a
dispersion solution obtained by dispersing the
chain clay mineral particles in a predetermined
dispersion medium as measured at a rotational
speed of 6 rpm, and η_{60} is
15 a viscosity (at 25°C) of the above dispersion
solution as measured at a rotational speed of 60
rpm,

of not smaller than 4.0 in a dispersion solution
obtained by dispersing chain clay mineral particles at
a concentration of 7% by weight in diethylhexyl
20 phthalate (DOP) as a dispersing medium and not smaller
than 3.0 in a dispersion solution obtained by
dispersing chain clay mineral particles at a
concentration of 3% by weight in water as a dispersion
medium;

25 a bulk density of not larger than 0.125 g/ml; and
a particle size distribution of secondary
particles as measured by a laser method, in which
particle sizes of larger than 1.0 μm but not larger
than 30 μm are not less than 70% by weight and particle
30 sizes of not larger than 1.0 μm are in a range of 5 to
30% by weight.

2. A thixotropy-imparting agent according to
claim 1, wherein said chain clay mineral particles
have an average aspect ratio of 7.5 to 9.5.

35 3. A thixotropy-imparting agent according to

claim 1, wherein said chain clay mineral particles are such that a primary particle shape thereof has an average fiber length of 0.45 to 0.80 μm as measured by using an electron microscope.

5 4. A thixotropy-imparting agent according to claim 1, wherein said chain clay mineral is holmite clay mineral.

 5. A thixotropy-imparting agent according to claim 4, wherein said holmite clay mineral is
10 sepiolite or attapulgite.

 6. A thixotropy-imparting agent according to claim 5, wherein said holmite clay mineral is sepiolite, and when the peak height stemming from the plane (110) of sepiolite is regarded to be 100%, the
15 peaks stemming from dolomite and calcite have intensity ratios of peaks of not larger than 25% in an X-ray diffraction measurement;

 7. A thixotropy-imparting agent according to claim 5, wherein said holmite clay mineral is
20 attapulgite, and when the peak height stemming from the plane (110) of attapulgite is regarded to be 100%, the peak stemming from calcite has an intensity ratio of peak of not larger than 50%.

 8. A coating material composition containing a
25 thixotropy-imparting agent of claim 1.

 9. An adhesive composition containing a thixotropy-imparting agent of claim 1.

 10. A resin composition containing a thixotropy-imparting agent of claim 1.
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